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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: US-USSR EXCHANGES AGREEMENT REVIEW TALKS

REF: (A) STATE 295448; (B) STATE 297186

1. REVIEW TALKS CONCLUDED DECEMBER 17 WITH DISCUSSION OF EXHIBITIONS, PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON 1977-79 PROGRAM AND CALL ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HITCHCOCK.

2. EXHIBITIONS: US SIDE EXPRESSED ITS PLEASURE THAT EXCHANGES UNDER SECTION 4 PARA 2 OF CURRENT PROGRAM ARE PROGRESSING WELL AND ITS WILLINGNESS TO FACILITATE FUTURE EXCHANGES OF THIS TYPE. US SIDE ALSO WELCOMED PROPOSED SOVIET NATIONAL EXHIBITION IN 1977, STRESSING NEED FOR TIMELY INFORMATION, AND NOTED US PROPOSAL FOR 1976 BICENTENNIAL EXHIBITION TO WHICH WE ARE AWAITING FAVORABLE REPLY ASAP. US SIDE SAID AMEMBASSY MOSCOW WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON SUBSTANCE OF EXHIBIT WHEN WE RECEIVE FROM SOVIETS POSITIVE REPLY TO PROPOSAL.

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3. US SIDE STRESSED THAT CORE OF EXHIBITS EXCHANGES REMAINS TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS AND NOTED POSITIVE REPLY TO US PROPOSAL FOR PHOTOGRAPHY USA EXHIBIT IN THREE CITIES TO FULFILL 1974-76 PROGRAM. US SIDE NOTED THAT AMEMBASSY AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAD AGREED TO BEGIN DETAIL NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS EXHIBIT IN JANUARY 1976 AND INFORMED SOVIET SIDE OF OUR INTENTION TO NEGOTIATE CONTRACT FOR SIX CITIES INCLUDING THREE UNDER 1977-79 PROGRAM. AT THIS POINT US SIDE EXPRESSED IN SOME DETAIL ITS DISSATISFACTION WITH INEQUITIES AND DISCRIMINATION IN FEES AND RATES WHICH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHARGES US FOR EXHIBITS, OBSERVING IN CONCLUSION THAT WE ARE PLEASED WITH EFFECT OF EXHIBITS AS WAY OF FURTHERING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

4. SOVIET SIDE AGREED THAT EXHIBITS ARE CENTRAL PART OF EXCHANGE PROGRAM AND THAT THINGS ARE GOING WELL. SOVIETS SAID THAT US WAS DOING MUCH RE INTRODUCING NEW THEMES IN EXHIBITS, AND WAS "AHEAD" OF SOVIET SIDE IN THIS REGARD. SOVIETS ADDED THAT US BICENTENNIAL PROPOSAL WAS BEING GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION IN MOSCOW AND THAT REPLY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SOON. SOVIETS SAID NOTHING ABOUT THEIR PROPOSED 1977 NATIONAL EXHIBIT. SOVIETS SAID THEY COULD NOT DEAL WITH DETAILS OF FINANCIAL ISSUES BUT THESE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED BY AMEMBASSY DURING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. SOVIET SIDE DENIED THAT RATES ARE DISCRIMINATORY SINCE THEY APPLY TO ALL FOREIGNERS, AND SAID MFA CANNOT TAKE PLACE OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN ORGANIZING EXHIBITS, BUT DELEGATION WILL INFORM CHAMBER OF US CONCERNS.

5. US SIDE ALSO CITED INEQUITY IN SOVIET REQUIREMENT FOR EXIT VISAS FOR EXHIBIT GUIDES, WHICH ARE NOT REQUIRED FOR SOVIET GUIDES IN US. SOVIET SIDE SAID THIS IS A LEGITIMATE ISSUE WHICH DELEGATION WILL RAISE WITH MFA CONSULAR AUTHORITIES. US SIDE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF SOVIET DELEGATION TOWARD VISA MATTER, AND NOTED THAT EXIT VISAS FOR GUIDES, STUDENTS, ETC. UNDER EXCHANGES AGREEMENT WOULD BE RAISED BY US SIDE DURING UPCOMING TALKS UNDER CONSULAR CONVENTION.

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6. 1977-79 PROGRAM: US SIDE BEGAN DISCUSSION BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT NEXT THREE-YEAR PROGRAM WILL BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO PERMIT EXPANSION AS WELL AS POSSIBLE SHIFTS IN EMPHASIS OF EXCHANGES. 1974-76 PROGRAM SHOULD BE VIEWED AS GUIDELINE ON WHICH TO BUILD, NOT A RIGID FRAMEWORK. NOTING THAT WE WERE NOT WEDDED TO SPECIFIC NUMBERS, US SIDE BELIEVED IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN "AT INAST" FORMULA IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR UPWARD FLEXIBILITY

IN NUMBERS AND KINDS OF EXCHANGES OF INTEREST TO BOTH SIDES. WE SAID THERE WERE EXCHANGES OF SCHOLARS, STUDENTS, ETC. WHICH WE WOULD WISH TO SEE CONTINUED AND WOULD HOPE FOR EXPANSION OF MAGAZINE CIRCULATION BEYOND 1974-76 PROGRAM LIMITS, MENTION OF IV PROGRAM, EXCHANGE UP TO TEN PAG'S AND SHOWING OF EXHIBITS IN UP TO EIGHTEEN CITIES DURING NEXT THREE YEAR PROGRAM. SOVIET REPLY WAS VERY GENERAL; THEY AGREED THAT 1977-79 PROGRAM SHOULD ALLOW ROOM FOR FLEXIBILITY AND EXPANSION WHILE FOLLOWING GENERAL FORMAT OF 1974-76 PROGRAM. SOVIET SIDE NOTED THAT CSCE FINAL ACT IMPOSES ADDITIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES AND THE TWO SIDES SHOULD CONSIDER INCLUDING SOME THINGS FROM THAT DOCUMENT IN THE 1977-79 PROGRAM.

7. US SIDE PROPOSED THAT DRAFTS OF 1977-79 PROGRAM BE EXCHANGED BY APRIL 1 AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE IN LATE SPRING, SUMMER OR EARLY FALL. SOVIET SIDE THOUGHT APRIL 1 DATE FOR EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS REALISTIC "IN PRINCIPLE" AND PROMISED FIRM REPLY AFTER CONSULTING INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS IN MOSCOW. SOVIET SIDE THOUGHT NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE DURING LATE SUMMER OR EARLY FALL. SITE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WAS LEFT OPEN. DURING INFORMAL, PRIVATE TALK, KARYAGIN SAID HE THOUGHT AMB. VOLSKIY WOULD LIKE TO COME TO US TO HOLD NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE EARLIER RATHER THAN LATER IN YEAR IF US SIDE THOUGHT THIS USEFUL. WE SAID WE THOUGHT WE COULD PROBABLY HOLD NEGOTIATIONS HERE, IF THEY WISHED.

8. DURING CALL ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HITCHCOCK, SOVIET SIDE SAID THERE HAD BEEN FRANK DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS AND SOME DOUBTS EXPRESSED DURING REVIEW TALKS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT THIS IS USEFUL AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVED PROGRAM IN FUTURE. US SIDE NOTED THAT WE HAD SET OUT SOME IDEAS THAT WILL BE HELPFUL WHEN WE NEGOTIATE NEW PROGRAM NEXT YEAR. HITCHCOCK NOTED IMPORTANCE OF EXCHANGES IN BUILDING RESERVOIR OF UNDERSTANDING, ESPECIALLY IF WE CAN EXPAND EXCHANGES TO INCLUDE BROADER AREAS OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES. SOVIET SIDE COMMENTED THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES IS SPECIAL ONE, AND SOVIETS WHO WORK ON EXCHANGES WITH US ARE AWARE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE AS FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVING POLITICAL RELATIONS.

9. DURING SEPARATE, PRIVATE DISCUSSION, SLAVIN SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO PASS ON INFORMALLY TO US SIDE THAT MHE MINISTER YELYUTIN COULD NOT COME TO US UNTIL AFTER PARTY

CONGRESS AND WOULD PREFER TO COME WHEN WEATHER TURNED WARM, POSSIBLY LATE SPRING.

10. REVIEW TALKS WERE UNIFORMLY CONSTRUCTIVE AND USEFUL. SOVIET DELEGATION WAS CLEARLY UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENT CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN MOST CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER POSSIBLE. BOTH SIDES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY TO AIR PROBLEMS FRANKLY, BUT SOVIETS MADE THEIR POINTS MILDLY AND RESPONDED TO US EXPRESSIONS OF DISSATISFACTION

IN RESTRAINED WAY. DESIRE OF BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION IN EXCHANGES CLEARLY OUTWEIGHED PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN IN VARIOUS PARTS OF EXCHANGE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER TALKS WILL IN FACT BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENT IN OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS RAISED.

11. USIA AND DEPARTMENT APPRECIATE EXCELLENT PAPERS PREPARED BY EMBASSY IN CONNECTION WITH REVIEW TALKS. KISSINGER

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